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STATE FOR WHA/BSC MDASCHBACH, T MHUMPHREY,
COMMERCE FOR SLOPP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [UY](#)
SUBJECT: URUGUAYAN NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANS NOT DEFINITIVE

REF: 08 STATE 127423

¶1. Uruguay is increasingly interested in diversifying its energy sector, potentially including the use of nuclear power. Currently, the implementation of such a program is prohibited by law, but President Tabare Vazquez authorized feasibility research of a civil nuclear program and its implications in April 2008. A technical team coordinated by the Directorate of Energy and Nuclear Technology (DNETN) within the Ministry of Industry, Energy, and Mining (MIEM) undertook the study and published their conclusions in October.

¶2. The report noted that while Uruguay is facing the challenge of meeting a growing demand for energy, the country is not ready to make a definitive decision on starting a nuclear program. Instead, the report recommends continued study of the subject. A number of legal hurdles would need to be overcome in order to realize a nuclear industry in Uruguay. The report concluded that if the industry develops, its guidelines and protocols would be developed according to international standards. The primary political consideration to be taken into account when choosing to cooperate with competing nuclear supplier states would be the potential exportation to neighboring countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina.

¶3. Were the GOU to initiate a civil nuclear energy program, Minister of Industry, Energy, and Mining Daniel Martinez would be the key government official in charge of it, with DNETN as the primary governing body. Key contacts at DNETN include Director Ramon Mendez and Advisor Pablo Mosto.

¶4. The GOU has signed twelve multilateral agreements on nuclear issues, and one bilateral agreement:

Multilateral:

- Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage of 1963 (Law 17,051)
- Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the GOU and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards in Relation with the Treaty for Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Law 17,753)
- Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Law 13,669)
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (Law 17,680)
- Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (Law 13,684)
- Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (Law 17,348)
- Convention on Nuclear Security (Law 17,588)
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Law 13,859)
- Convention on Assistance in the Case of Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Law 16,075)
- Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Law 16,075)
- Convention for the Establishment of a European Organization for Nuclear Research (Entered into effect September 9, 1954)
- Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Agency for the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
(Law 14,815)

Bilateral:

--With Argentina: Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Peaceful
Uses of Nuclear Energy (Law 14,074)

¶5. Uruguay has no known deposits of uranium, but the GOU believes there are potential areas for mining. MIEM has put out a call for international investors to support the exploration for uranium in the country.

¶6. If Uruguay did decide to implement a civil nuclear power program, it would result in state-owned plants and seek international financing to start the project. Many of the components to construct reactors would need to be imported. The GOU would likely request a TDA grant to study the best way to initiate the program and look to the U.S. nuclear industry for consultation and perhaps constructing infrastructure, though the latter could also be contracted through European firms.

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